



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING



ISMAEL AHMED
DIRECTOR

January 23, 2008

The Honorable Bill Hardiman, Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on DHS
Michigan State Senate
State Capitol
Lansing, Michigan 48933

The Honorable Dudley Spade
House Appropriations Subcommittee on DHS
Michigan House of Representatives
State Capitol
Lansing, Michigan 48933

Dear Senator Hardiman and Representative Spade:

Section 545 of the 2007 Public Act No. 131 requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to report on new services available to children needing special services in the previous year.

During the past year, DHS has completed a new contract with Vista Maria for Treatment Foster Care and a contract with St. John's for Accelerated Residential Treatment:

- The Vista Maria contract delivers services to children who would otherwise be placed in shelter care or residential settings through a partnership between Vista Maria and the Guidance Center. Care is provided to the children by foster parents who are specially trained to work with children who have severe difficulties.
- The St. John's contract provides services that are intended to increase the speed with which children benefit from residential placement and provide sufficient post-placement support to promote stability for the child after release from the residential placement.

Both of these services will be evaluated carefully to determine effectiveness and value for broader implementation.

In addition, DHS is planning for future service needs in some key areas:

- A request for proposals for shelter care services in Wayne County was issued in December 2007. We plan to move with all deliberate speed to select a provider and execute a contract in this area.
- A DHS work group has conducted a survey of local DHS offices, private service providers and court personnel to identify unmet residential service needs for children in Michigan. The results of the survey are being analyzed to identify additional programs and services that might be needed to address specific problems, to place children as close to their homes as possible, and to achieve our collective goal of decreasing the amount of time children need to stay in residential care.
- An expanded pilot of treatment foster care is under consideration to provide a more thorough evaluation of this service as an alternative for stabilizing children with severe needs so that they can be placed in the least restrictive setting possible – in their own homes whenever possible.

Recently, DHS has formed a Partnership for Excellence Work Group, a collaborative group including representatives of private agencies and DHS. We intend to use this group to help coordinate our work on key mandates established by the legislature and to address other issues that require coordination and collaboration.

If you have any questions about this report, please contact John Sorbet, chief administrative officer, at 373-7787.

Sincerely,



Ismael Ahmed

cc: Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittees
Senate and House Standing Committees on Human Services
Senate and House Fiscal Agencies
Senate and House Policy Offices
State Budget Director